THE SACRAMENTS

by

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FOREWORD

In considered assessment, the cosmos itself is "sacrament". As the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* says, "Taking the word sacrament in its broadest sense as the sign of something sacred and hidden (the Greek word is 'mystery') we can say that the whole world is a vast sacramental system . . . . . Material things are to men the signs of things spiritual and sacred, even of Divinity". "The invisible things of him . . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity". (Romans 1.20) The cosmos *is* this, or is non-existent. In actual fact it constantly reveals to us, in whatever study or pursuit we engage, something more of the nature, quality, and further dimensions of its being; that is the essential of "existence". In common usage, for the Roman, the *sacramentum* was the solemn vow by which a soldier (for example) bound himself to his allegiance and duties; similarly for the actively religious person it is that which, accepted, "binds" each to the nature of things, acknowledgement of life in its fullness, dedication within "creative" process and activity. All life experience is sacramental in varying degree, whether daily round, community activities, or revelatory communications of art, literature, and science. Even though we fail to enter upon sacramental fulfilment, or refuse to participate (through manifested Being) the total all-pervading energies of life. Thus St. Thomas defined sacrament as "Signum rei sacrae in quantum est sanctificans homines". The whole cosmos is the *sign* effective as *sacrament* when its communication, activity, is received *de facto* by men and women.

A sacrament is thus not something peripheral, optional, gratuitous elaboration of devotional edification for the devotee—it is the fundamental, of the essence—*essential*—needed for progress into fuller being and life. The Master said, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly". The sacramental process of the cosmos, its valid expression, is thus unfolding life, itself origin, means, and end. So we ourselves participate the cosmic process and share, as centres of consciousness, its life. St. Thomas Aquinas said, presenting the cosmic totality in words suitable for our apprehension. "It is the nature of man to be led by things corporeal and sense-perceptible to things spiritual and intelligible". (III Q lxi a.l.). Every "religion" must necessarily develop its own validated special signs and sacraments (in the literal and general sense) says St. Augustine (Cont. Faust., XIX xi). For St. Augustine a sacrament is basically the sign of a sacred thing. It is outward form of inner divinity, communicating the grace of God. So he applies the word generally —for example to the Symbolum or Creed. For the christian the significance, parallel with the Greek *mysterion*, hidden nature (or "reality" if you like that term) of all things, leads gradually to the recognition of greater and lesser "sacramental" occasions and apprehensions. Otto pointed to the sense of the "numinous" which invests certain localities and occasions; so, too, religious sensitivity records "holy

places", shrines of pilgrimage, evocative patterns within the material world; while many today are talking of "ley lines" and widely ranging, life-promoting, natural or man-structured energy centres. In the field of developed and organised perception, such a Catholic thinker as Hugh of St. Victor lists upwards of thirty "specific" sacraments. For us the pervading and pre-existent divinity is mediated to mankind uniquely by the Christ-life. "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God". For the Church seven great sacraments were, through experience and authority, established, although the whole sacramental nature of Being was not, in any way, thus ignored. All things focus and culminate in the great and carefully celebrated sacraments. These are effective means whereby (*a*) the union of God with man, Incarnation, is perpetuated in Christ's mystical Body, the Church, and (*b*) its members are incorporated in Him, and, through Him, united with one another. Here is restoration of the potential, and essential, unity, divinization, the "realization", of all things, in their ultimate source and Being. Recognising the all-embracing nature of sacramental reality, the church has listed other actions and usages which have special significance, "Sacramentals". But these are not ordained of Christ and, as channels, depend largely on individual response, whereas the seven sacraments instituted by the Christ work inevitably; the recipient may place obstacles in their way to "dispute" their efficacy; but they are still "valid".

Theologically, the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* says, the Sacraments exhibit the principle of the Incarnation by the embodiment of spiritual reality in material form; an appropriate counterpart of the union of God with man in the Person of Christ is made patent. They exhibit also the objectivity of God's action on the human "soul". Reception of God's gifts in the Christian sacraments is not dependent on changing subjective human feelings but on acceptance of the Divine "will". And, again, the sacraments show, as mediated through the Church, an essentially social structure.

One would add, beyond this, that the Eastern Liturgies and the Tridentine Mass of the Roman Church, exemplify, no less than the Liberal Catholic Church, the cosmic nature of the liturgy. Indeed, the best available statement of this is probably in a work, *Christian Monism*, by the Jesuit scientist, Fr. Wassman, including such chapters as "Modern Means of Communication in the Realm of Spirit", "The Stroke of the Cosmic Clock", linking into "The Eucharistic Christ", a book which received the Imprimatur of the Roman Church, both in original and translation.

In this booklet the Rev. T. W. Shepherd presents the seven sacraments, and states, clearly and simply, their work and the requirements for their conferment. He does so not as an academic or a theorist, but as one constantly engaged and experienced in sacramental work. Long years of devoted service as a priest gives his words immediacy and authority. He refrains from drawing directly and verbally on his own perceptions in these matters; but

perception and experience underlie all the truths he presents. The priest in training could have no better guide, direct and clear. As one who has had the privilege of working in the Sanctuary with the Rev. T. W. Shepherd, I may be allowed, I think, to commend his words to all my clerical brethren and to the instructed laity. It is a privilege to have this opportunity so to do.

✠JAMES

I have added a few notes (signed by me) which students may care to consider; these are my own responsibility, not that of the Rev. T. W. Shepherd.

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INTRODUCTION

In the literature of the Liberal Catholic Church it is stated that the seven Historical Sacraments are administered, but little further information is added to clarify what is meant by the Sacraments. Doubtless at the time some of the literature was written, the general public was better informed, but many people come to our movement nowadays without any clear ideas on the subject. It seems desirable to state shortly what is meant by the word "sacrament" more especially in the ecclesiastical sense, and to explain the general teaching of the whole Catholic Church in relation thereto. As Liberal Catholics we should be conversant with this teaching in order that we may discuss the subject intelligently with our Catholic friends, and also that we can explain the catholic viewpoint to those unfamiliar with it. Where the general interpretation differs from our own we can take the opportunity of saying what is generally held among Liberal Catholics, taking care to explain also that we have no dogmas in this matter as in any other, and all views can be freely held within our Church.

Ecclesiastically, the Sacrament is the outward sign of an inward grace, which was instituted by Christ, by means of which life is given to the soul. In ancient times the word "sacrament" was used to express the actual obligation undertaken at the swearing of an oath—the intangible part or undertaking distinct from the actual words used. A soldier taking the oath of allegiance was said to have taken the military sacrament. Such was the ordinary profane meaning. In the ecclesiastical sense it means a sacred thing which is hidden or concealed. The Greeks made use of the word "mystery" to convey the same meaning.

The whole of the catholic portion of the Church deems three things to be essential to a sacrament—viz.

1. An outward or visible sign (the sensible sign).
2. Divine institution by the Lord.
3. The sensible sign must have the power of giving the grace promised by the Lord.

With regard to the outward sign, it must be preceivable by the senses, but indicative of something else. For example, the rainbow visible in the sky after rain is a sensible sign of the promise given by God to Noah that "He would no more send the floods to destroy all flesh". Catholics regard the rainbow amongst other things, as being one of the sacraments of the Old Law, those instituted by Christ being the sacraments of the New Law. The sensible sign is the thing seen and the words spoken. For instance, in Baptism, the words "I baptise thee . . . " and the flow of the water signify the cleansing from original sin. As Liberal Catholics we may have very pronounced views on original sin not in keeping with those generally held by our more "orthodox" brethren, but whatever the view held, the sensible sign in Baptism indicates a purification.

It is further held that, in the Church of Christ, the sacraments must have been instituted by Him. It is a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church that Christ instituted them when on earth either before His death, or after His Resurrection. The Roman Church also goes on to say that He instituted them "immediately", and not as some of the early Fathers taught—that He gave the Apostles authority to institute them after He had ascended. On this point there is plenty of scope for further thought by membersof our Church. Bishop Wedgwood felt that the sacrament of Penance, as it has come down to us, was not at all what the Lord intended, and this view seems to have been shared by Bishop Leadbeater, and to have been reflected in our Liturgy. The Roman Church admits that the "immediate institution" was not always part of the Faith, but since the Council of Trent it has been a dogma. Bishop Leadbeater suggests that the main features were clearly impressed upon the Apostles by the Lord, but that the small variants in detail that occur have come about by a difference of interpretation or recollection by the Apostles or their early successors, and also by local conditions and circumstances. So both positions appear to be right within limits.

The third requirement is that what is done must have the power of giving Christ's grace. It must be the channel of His Love. Many ceremonies are beautiful and uplifting, but it does not follow that, because they are that, they give a special character to the soul, or are a specially chosen means of conveying Christ's grace. The reason the sacraments do that is that the Lord caused it to be so. They were instituted precisely to produce grace. They are the efficacious signs of it. The sacraments contain grace and directly effect its production in the individual. The question is very often asked—"How can these material things produce in the soul a supernatural transformation?" The answer is really quite simple—God is the principal agent in the transformation, and can and does renew His creature just as an artist can by brush and paint reproduce on his canvas the finest conceptions of his mind.

These three requirements can be associated with the well known principles of Will, Wisdom and Activity; the Divine institution corresponding to Will, the efficacy of the channel to Love-wisdom, and the sensible sign and action to Activity.

The sacraments of Christ are seven in number. They are—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony. It is intended to deal with them in detail later, but they can be briefly explained as follows. Baptism is the first sacrament to be received. It is the gateway or door. By it the soul is born again into Christ. It is the initiation into the Mysteries of Christ. Confirmation is the strengthening of the grace already received at Baptism, and by the Holy Eucharist the soul is nourished. By Penance the soul is restored to spiritual health, and by Extreme Unction the traces of sin are obliterated, the soul is invigorated and, if it be God's Will, the body is also restored to health. In Holy Orders power is given to perpetuate the administration of the

sacraments and the performance of the sacred functions. Matrimony —to quote from Roman Catholic sources—was "instituted for the holy union of man and woman for the preservation of the race ..... and the education of children in the knowledge of religion and love of God".

The sacraments can also be divided under headings:-

a) Those that impress a character and those that do not.

b) Those necessary and those not necessary for salvation.

c) Sacraments of the living and of the dead.

Those that impress a character are Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. Some change is effected in the spiritual make-up of the person. It is, as it were, as if a seal is impressed upon the soul. Because of the character implanted, such sacraments cannot be repeated, although, in case of doubt, a particular sacrament may be administered 'sub conditione.' The other sacraments do not impresss a character, and so may be repeated as often as necessary.

As to those necessary and to those not necessary, this is a division that is deemed of very great importance in orthodox churches. To people with the very wide views usually held in the Liberal Catholic Church, this and the third division are of less importance, and may be of academic interest only, but they must be mentioned to explain the conceptions of other Churches.

The Roman Church holds that, of those necessary, some are necessary as "a means of salvation", and others are "necessary of precept." Baptism and Penance are of the former. Baptism—"in reality or by desire"—because it is the door to the other sacraments, and Penance for those who have "fallen into sin"—Those necessary of Precept—that is in obedience to a divine ordinance are: Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction.

Those "not necessary' are those not necessary for individuals, but which are necessary for the community—Holy Orders and Matrimony.

The division into sacraments of the living and of the dead must not be associated with physical death. Here life and death are used entirely in a spiritual sense. The sacraments of the dead are those that give the life of grace to those who are spiritually dead. They are Baptism and Penance, and bring the soul back from the death of sin to the life of grace. The other sacraments are called "of the living", because the recipient is supposed to be in a state of grace, and Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony are each deemed to increase that grace.

There are certain essential elements which make up the constitution of a sacrament. They are three in number: Matter, Form and Minister. The matter of a sacrament is the sensible thing used, in as much as it is determined by the form of words. It is two-fold—remote and proximate. The remote matter is the thing itself—water in

Baptism—the proximate matter is its application; in Baptism, the actual pouring of the water. The form is that part of the sacrament which determines the matter, or gives it its signification. Ordinarily, the form consists of the words used by the Minister. The Minister is he who acts in the rite. The primary Minister in all the sacraments is Christ in Whose Name all the sacraments are conferred. "He it is that baptizeth". St. John 1, 32. The secondary minister is he who confers the sacraments in Christ's Name and by His authority.

Two conditions are required of the secondary minister: (*a*) that he has the power and authority given him by the Lord, and (*b*) that he has at the time of performance the intention of doing what the Church does. The Bishops only have received power from the Lord to confer Holy Orders, and—in the view of the Anglican Church, which is shared by the Liberal Catholic Church—Confirmation. To the Priests is given authority to consecrate the Holy Eucharist and administer Penance and Unction. Anyone can administer Baptism, but, on Matrimony, the Church has always taught that it is the couple themselves who are the 'Ministers'.

Before concluding these general remarks, reference must also be made to the worthiness of the Minister. It has always been held "that the worthiness of the Minister effecteth not the validity of the sacraments." There is reference in the Fathers to the "Baptism of Judas" being preferred (in theory) to the Baptism of John.* The former, despite the ignominy and acrimony that attaches to his name, baptized (as one holding the Apostolate) in the name of the Lord,** while the latter baptized only in a form of his own contriving —the point to be remembered being that it is Christ Himself Who is the primary Minister acting through those authorized by Him to administer the particular sacrament.

Great care was taken when the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church was compiled to see that the matter and form were correctly retained and the Minister a proper one, correctly instructed. Although this was particularly important in order that no imputation of invalidity could be raised by informed opponents of the movement,the the primary reason was to ensure that the love of the Blessed Lord, which had come down to mankind by this wonderful means for nineteen hundred years, should continue to flow in ever wider flood into the Liberal Catholic Church, striving to forward the work of her Master in the world, and to feed His flock.

BAPTISM

The Council of Trent defined Baptism as "The Sacrament of regeneration by water in the Word". In the ordinary catechism of the Roman Catholic Church it is described as "a sacrament which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christian children of God and members of His church".

*Consider Acts XIX 1-7

**The view supposes that the Sacrament was instituted prior to the Passion.

✠JAMES

In Baptism the *sensible sign* is the pouring of water on the body and the invocation of the Three Persons of the Trinity, this external sign properly demonstrating that grace which purifies the soul as water purifies the body. Baptism in some form was a relatively common ceremony in the period of our Lord's earthly life. The purifying character of the ceremony appealed to the inner urge of the supplicant of those days who was earnestly desirous of cleansing his own nature, and St. John the Baptist was but one of many who used such a rite.

As on so many other occasions, our Lord took the familiar act and transformed it into something essentially His own, giving it a permanence and a special character through which He could pour His blessing during the coming ages. Baptism as a Christian sacrament is held to have been instituted by Christ when He said "Go into all nations baptising them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost". The whole church looks upon Baptism as the initiatory rite of Christianity.

The Matter of this sacrament is water and the Form the words—"I baptize thee . . . . in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes three types of Baptism, namely, *Fluminis* (by water), *Sanguinis* (by blood) and *Flaminis* (by desire). Baptism by water is the most general form but, doubtless impelled by the need to find some way of fitting into an ordered scheme those many saintly souls who, on historical grounds, could not have received the sacraments, the conception of a Baptism by desire was evolved. The church considered Baptism as the essential form of admission, and when Baptism by water is not possible, e.g., in time of plague or persecution the Roman Church holds that it can be supplied "by desire". In other words, the earnest wish of the person to be baptized is deemed to be sufficient. It must be borne in mind that in almost all sections of the Christian church salvation is believed to be available only to the baptized person. The third form, by blood, is through martyrdom. Romantic literature affords many examples of the acceptance of Christianity followed almost immediately by martyrdom in the arena. Such Christians are said to have received the Baptism of blood.

As already mentioned, the matter of the sacrament is water; the *remote* matter is any water, sea water, fresh water, spring water, rainwater, and the *proximate* matter is the actual washing or ablution. There are three types of ablution; Immersion (by dipping), Aspersion (by sprinkling) and Infusion (by pouring). In these days infusion is the usual form in western churches with the exception of those where total immersion is considered essential. Aspersion is not used at all in the Catholic churches, but is in some extreme Protestant communities, or was, until a few years ago. Whatever the form used, the essential of the rite is that *water should flow*, so that the person baptized could be considered as *washed*, this sensible sign indicating a graceful purification. Although it is essential that the water should flow, it is not necessaty for it to flow on the head. The washing of

any member of the body will suffice. Catholic literature gives example of persons baptized on foot or arm because no other part of the body could be thrust through the bars of the prison cell. Similarly, in cases of certain illnesses where water poured over the head might prove injurious, another member may be used.

In this sacrament the form (which, it will be recalled, consists of the words 'I baptize thee . . . . in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost") must be accompanied by the pouring of water. Further, it is required that the *Lord's actual words*, as recorded, be used, and no other formula. Thus, "In the Name of Christ", "In the Name of the Trinity", "In the Name of the Virgin Mary", are all inadequate; each Person of the Trinity must be named. The Eastern Churches use a slightly different opening phrase, "May the child (or servant) of Christ be baptized," but conclude with the words" . . . . in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost", and in this rite the babe is thrust three times into the water once as each Person of the Trinity is named; a local variant of custom, but the intention is clear.

In the sacrament of Baptism, the Minister, the third requirement, is interpreted in the widest possible way. Normally a Bishop or Priest is the Minister and either of these Ministers, but no other, can baptize *solemnly*, that is, using the holy oils in addition to the water. In the absence of a Priest, a Deacon is empowered to baptize, and is so directed at his ordination to the Diaconate. On urgent occasions, such as when a person is likely to die, anyone may baptize, using the simple act of pouring water and saying the formula with the intention of doing as the church directs. It often falls to doctors and midwives so to act. The Roman Catholic Church holds that it is better that a man baptize than a woman, but makes the provisions that "he should do it who is better instructed in the Faith". In other words, a devout woman is to be preferred to a, no doubt, well-intentioned but perhaps (ecclesiastically speaking) ignorant porter or policeman. It might be mentioned that theologians have held that the Minister need not himself be a Christian; all that is required is that the correct matter and form be employed and that the Minister shall intend to do as the church does.

It is customary at ordinary Baptisms for at least one person of each sex to stand as sponsor for the child being baptized. These persons are the God-parents and in Roman theology they, in acting as sponsors, are held to acquire the same relationship to the child as his earthly parents hold, so that they come within the prohibited degrees pertaining to matrimony. To the modern mind this may seem exaggerated, but it was taken so seriously in mediaeval times that countless dispensations were applied for to permit matrimony in such sircumstances. A similar consanguineous relationship was held to be contracted by the Minister at Baptism. With infant Baptism as the norm, and a celibate clergy, this would present no difficulty, but in cases of adult Baptism, and a clergy permitted to marry, some nice situations could arise! The relationship is not

really as fanciful as it may at first seem, if consideration is given to the inner effects of Baptism.

The Roman catechism describes the effects of Baptism as:-

1) Remission of original sin.

2) The person is made a child of God and an heir of the Kingdom

3) The rite incorporates the person into Christ's church.

4) A character is impressed upon the soul.

In view of the rejection by many Liberal Catholics of the whole idea of original sin, this first effect has, for most of us, very little meaning. It must, however, be recognized that to members of other churches it is of very great importance and we should not dismiss the matter without reference to the late Bishlop Leadbeater's remarks about debts from the past, in respect of which he uses the well-known term karma. Such debts, he held, every person brought into this life. He stated that it was consequently of immense advantage to receive the sacrament of Baptism, especially in the case of an infant, for, in some way, he maintained, the weight or burden of these debts was thereby eased. The words in our Liturgy " .... I exorcize all influences and seeds of evil; I lay upon them the spell of Christ's holy Church, that they may be bound fast as with iron chains and cast into outer darkness, that they trouble not this servant of God; . . . ", may to modern ears sound fanciful, poetic or archaic, but they carry with them the power of Christ and may properly describe a process which takes place in the inner nature of the baptismal candidate.

The second and third effects follow naturally from the purpose of the rite itself, but the fourth effect is of peculiar interest. Baptism is one of the sacraments which impresses a character. As a seal sets a character on warm wax so the sign of the cross is impressed upon the candidate. Subtle changes take place in the various bodies used by the person and, in addition, a special link is made between him and the Lord, the link Our Lord intended should be forged when He instituted the sacrament. Thereafter the child, specially linked by a personal tie with Christ, is, in an inner sense, the better equipped and co-ordinated to face life's journey. It is this re-alignment which is reflected in older churches' teaching concerning the new relationship of candidate, sponsor and Minister.

In all Catholic churches the baptismal rites end with a charge to the sponsors, to present the child in due course before the Bishop to be confirmed by him. This is a responsibility laid upon the God-parents and it is their duty as Christians, as well as their duty to the Godchild, to see that this is done. If the candidate is of mature years he himself is similarly charged. Baptism does, in some mysterious way, make the babe a child of Christ, but full membership of Christ's church is not attained until, in the next sacrament that the

child is privileged and entitled to receive, the grace of baptism is confirmed.

In the Eastern Churches the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are to some extent conjoined. This special arrangement is best dealt with in the section on Confirmation.

CONFIRMATION

In the sacrament of Confirmation the candidate receives the Holy Ghost to strengthen the grace received in Baptism and to make him a strong soldier of Christ. The word 'confirmation' signifies strengthening, establishing or perfecting something already existent.

The *sensible sign* in this sacrament is the imposition of the hand together with the pronunciation of words. According to Roman Catholic doctrine the anointment with holy oil at the same time as the speaking of the words is also essential to the validity of the rite.

There is biblical reference to show that Confirmation has been a sacrament of the church from the earliest times. The people of Samaria, who had been converted to Christianity by Philip, the Deacon, ". . . . had received the word of God . . . . only they were baptized . . . . Then laid they (1) their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost . . . . through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given . . . "(2). The actual institution of the sacrament by Christ is held to have taken place either on the eve of the Passover, after the first Eucharist, when Christ promised to send the Comforter. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance" (3), or after the Resurrection when He had been seen by the apostles and had been "speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God".(4) The former occasion, when possibly He also taught the apostles how to make the chrism, seems the more likely, particularly as, following tradition from earliest times, each Bishop in the Western Church consecrated in his cathedral on succeeding Maundy Thursdays the chrism and other oils for use during the next twelve months. In the Eastern Churches the chrism is also always consecrated on Maundy Thursdays, though not annually, in Constantinople by the Ecumenical Patriarch and other Patriarchs and Bishops. It is then distributed through the various Diocesan Bishops. The physical components of chrism are olive oil, balsam, and other substances.

Regarding the three requirements of *Matter*, *Form* and *Minister*, the older churches, as has been said, hold that the anointing with holy oil is an essential and integral part of the sacrament, and that the Matter of the sacrament is the anointing with chrism by the imposition of the Bishop's hand. The *remote* Matter is the chrism

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(1) The apostles Peter and John, who were sent to Samaria.
(2) *ACTS, VIII*, vv. 14-18.
(3) *JOHN XIV*, v. 26
(4) *ACTS, I*, v. 3

and the Bishop's hand, and the *proximate* Matter the actual imposition.

The *words used* constitute the Form of the sacrament and they must contain:-

1) The word 'confirm' or an equivalent
2) The naming of the Three Persons of the Trinity, as required in Baptism
3) The word 'thee' to designate the recipient of the grace bestowed
4) The words "I sign thee with the sign of the cross . . . and . . . the chrism (of salvation)."

The Liberal Catholic rite meets these theological requirements in the liturgical words "Receive the Holy Ghost for the sweet savour of a godly life; whereunto I do sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The meaning attached to the words are that the signing with the sign of the cross is the bestowal of the badge of a soldier in Christ's service; confirming with chrism is parallel to the ancient anointing of athletes (the apostles used athletic similes in several of their epistles), while the pronouncing of the Names of the Persons of the Trinity expresses the principal cause of the plentitude of grace.

Ordinarily the *Minister* is a Bishop, but there were occasions in the Roman rite when a Priest might confirm by special permission using the chrism. For the past three hundred years this has been permitted in mission work in the more inaccessible parts of the world, but it has recently become more common. Since the Second Vatican Council all Roman Catholic Priests appear to be authorized to act as the Minister. The Priest does not administer the sacrament by right, but by a special delegation of the Bishop's power. He would be what is known as an *extraordinary* Minister, the Bishop being the *ordinary* Minister. In the Lutheran churches there are Ministers with the functions of Bishops but, except in certain territories where the apostolic succession has not been lost or has been restored, they are not Bishops as is generally understood in Catholic terminology. These Ministers conduct Confirmation services but if one of their number is not available a senior Priest in the district presides over the ceremony. The intention to follow apostolic custom is obviously there, but Catholic theologians would not admit the validity of such a rite, nor for slightly different reasons would the Eastern Churches accept it.

As was indicated at the conclusion of the section on Baptism, the Eastern Churches normally administer Confirmation immediately following Baptism. It is generally referred to as Chrismation or Holy Chrism. In Russia it is called Myro or Holy Myrrh. After having baptized the child, the Priest anoints in the form of a cross the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breasts, hands and feet

using each time the formula "The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Ghost". The formula implies that something additional to Baptism has been given by the sign and anointing. Should the Baptism not take place in church but in a private house or hospital the Chrismation is omitted but when the child is strong enough he is taken to the church and there anointed with chrism. The Chrismation must take place in church. This requirement would seem to indicate an acknowledge--ment that the sacrament of Baptism and what in the West we know as Confirmation and in the East as Chrismation are separate rites.

Confirmation is one of the sacraments which confer a *character* on the candidate. The grace of Baptism is strengthened, the link with the Lord perfected, and a further change takes place in the psychic nature of the candidate. It is doubtful whether a Priest has the power to do these things. At his ordination he is not charged to confirm; although the Roman Catholic church does authorize extra-ordinary Ministers to meet special needs, it is a departure from a custom of apostolic times which the present writer trusts will never be countenanced in the Liberal Catholic Church.

There is a small part in the service of Confirmation which often causes comment and provokes questions from the laity. This is the light blow on the cheek with which the Bishop dismisses each candidate, and it might be as well to explain its significance. At Confirmation the candidate is made a full member of Christ's church and a soldier in His service. The blow is sometimes said to signify the buffets of life and the scorn which the candidate must expect to suffer if he is to witness for the Lord. The blow may, however, have a different meaning and origin. In the time of the Roman empire, when a master manumitted (gave his freedom to) a slave he turned him, or caused him to turn, around three times and then struck him a playful blow about the head with words such as "Go—be off with you", indicating that he had no more call on the newly-freed slave, that he was now a free man and on his own. In somewhat the same way the candidate, being no more a child, is a freeman of Christianity, able to go whether he will.*

The Church provides a means of grace for every phase of the earthly life. Although Confirmation is administered to an adult of any age, the most suitable time in life for administration is in early puberty. The special impetus it gives towards spiritual things awakens qualities of idealism in the young persons and helps him over the difficulties of adolescence. Just as other religions provide for the young person's needs at this time, so the Christian church has this sacrament to help her maturing youth. Although it must never be thought that Confirmation is intended only for young people, parents and God-parents should bear this special aspect in mind, and fulfil the undertaking with which they were charged at the child's

*The *alapa* (or light blow) is perhaps an imitation of the blow with the sword by which (in the west) a young warrior was dubbed a knight and symbolises the spiritual warfare ahead of the candidate.

✠JAMES

Baptism. For the older person there is always the idea of the Soldier of the Cross engaged in the warfare of the spirit, for which he is amply equipped with the armour of God that he is charged to put on, and plenteously refreshed with the Living Bread and Wine of the great sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

This is the sacrament first in order of dignity. It is variously named the Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Sacrifice and the Sacrament of the Altar. The first title is simply the Anglicized form of the Greek work meaning thanksgiving. The others are mostly self-explanatory. To some minds the last named, the Sacrament of the Altar, is the most fitting because an altar implies sacrifice and it is consecrated and preserved upon an altar. This title is widely used in Roman Catholic literature.

The Roman and Orthodox churches tend to regard this sacrament as the sacrifice of Calvary which is mystically renewed.* This view is permissible in the Liberal Catholic Church, but many members think rather of the Cosmic Sacrifice of the Logos which caused, and which causes, the universe to be—a continuing process in which each of us has a part. This idea is wonderfully expressed in the phrase in our liturgy "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world dying in very truth that we might live."

The three essentials of sacrament—sensible sign, divine institution and the power of giving grace—are easily discernible. The sensible sign is to be found in the species and appearance of the bread and wine and in the words pronounced, since the former can be seen, touched and tasted, and the words heard, although the substance is changed.

The sacrament was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper when He said: "Take, eat, this is my body . . . . Take, drink, this is my blood . . . . " The Roman Church holds that the species change to the Lord's "actual" body and blood, although still appearing as bread and wine. This view is also permissible in the Liberal Catholic Church. It must, however, be said that many members think of the species becoming vehicles for the Lord's life, and in that way He is received mystically.**

The bread and wine are also the sign which represents and confers grace as they represent earthly food and also signify the grace which supports and nourishes the soul. The Holy Eucharist confers grace in that we receive the Author of grace Himself: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of

*The cosmic significance of the Eucharist is made very clear in the Orthodox and other Eastern Liturgies (✠JAMES).

**Consult Bishop Leadbeater *The Science of the Sacraments.* Chapter on *The Holy Eucharist.* Commentary on "This is my body". "The *Accidents* being unchanged . . . the *substance* has been definitely *altered* . . . replaced by another".
✠JAMES

this bread he shall live for ever and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The sacrament differs from all others in that it does not cease to be when the action which produces it ceases. The other sacraments have a transitory existence—when done, they are finished, although the effect remains. The Holy Eucharist has a permanent existence.

The matter of the sacrament is the bread and wine, and they are both the remote and proximate matter. In the other sacraments the thing that remains is remote and the proximate matter is the passing use of the thing. In Baptism,e.g., the remote matter is water which remains and the proximate matter is the actual pouring. In the Eucharist the reverse is the case. The remote matter does not remain, and the proximate matter, which may be said to be the species of bread and wine, remains. In regard to the actual bread used it should be wheaten bread, wheat having a greater significance than rye, oats, barley or other cereals. In the Western Churches, the bread is unleavened and is round in shape, for both Priest and laity. In the Eastern Churches leavened bread is used. The Priest's portion is square, while the people's is usually triangular.

The form of the Holy Eucharist consists of the words "This is my body . . . This is my Blood . . . Do this in remembrance of Me". This form of words differs from the form of other sacraments—"I baptize thee . . . I confirm thee . . . I absolve thee . . . " In the Sacrament of the Altar Christ's actual words of institution are used.

The Minister is a validly consecrated Bishop or ordained Priest. Such persons are the ordinary Ministers to consecrate and to communicate. A Deacon may communicate the people, although he may not celebrate the Eucharist. In extreme necessity, inferior clergy or lay people of either sex may communicate others or themselves. It is a matter of history that Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, communicated herself shortly before her execution from a locket she had worn throughout her captivity. At the time of the Reformation the custom of always carrying on the person the consecrated Host in a special pyx was common among resurgent Catholics dwelling in Protestant territories and was revival of that practice in the early church, in times of persecution, whereby lay persons carried communion to their fellows in captivity, or in hiding or in remote places.

Before communicating, or being communicated, each saw that he was in a state of grace to administer or to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

PENANCE

This is the sacrament which, of all the seven, is the most misinterpreted and the most misunderstood. Indeed, to members of the Liberal Catholic Church, as to many other thinking people, it presents difficulties which make a full comprehension of it elusive.

The subject is extensive and, alas, controversial. Only brief notes can be incorporated in this series.

There are numerous instances in the Gospel stories where the Blessed Lord has used the words "Thy sins be forgiven thee", and these instances are deemed to be the record of the sacrament's divine institution. The ancient name of the sacrament was the Imposition of Hands, and it was so called from the rite by which the confessor, in giving absolution, placed his right hand on the penitent's head.

The remote matter of the sacrament has been classified by Latin theologians as the sins committed, and the proximate matter the three stages of penance—contrition, confession and satisfaction. These stages were thought out centuries ago, long before what we call modern psychology was evolved, but they are quite in harmony with modern concepts. The recognition of a fault or failing and the desire to amend are the first requirements. The mental and emotional, and in the traditional churches the verbal, rejection of it follows, and the satisfaction may be said to refer to the absolution pronounced and the sense of cleansing or release which is experienced.

The form of the sacrament is the formula of absolution pronounced by the Priest: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" accompanied, according to some authorities, by his raising his hand as he says the words. The word "absolve ' is considered to be essential, and the declaration of the sacred Persons probably so. The form must be in spoken words—written absolutions are held to be invalid. Where a Priest who hears a confession feels unable to absolve on his own authority, he refers the matter to ecclesiastical superiors who, after due thought, may give him authority to pronounce absolution. The absolution itself is not conveyed in the letter of authority, but only permission to pronounce absolution. This seems to indicate something of the peculiar magic of the spoken word.

In the Liberal Catholic liturgy the absolution is pronounced at each service in which sacramental grace is given. The Confiteor is phrased in such wide terms that there are no difficulties which might prevent its conscientious expression by a thinking congregation, and this general confession is held to be sufficient for the purpose intended. Seen with the inner vision, such conscientious expression of the ideas incorporated in the Confiteor puts the congregation into the right conditions of mind and heart to receive the absolution pronounced by the Priest in the Lord's Name. Bishop Leadbeater spoke of a straightening out, or re-alignment, of the various "vehicles" of expression, and most Liberal Catholics look upon the sacrament of Penance in some such way.

It is interesting to record that Bishop Wedgwood stated that he was of the opinion that the Apostles, or their early successors, had in some way misunderstood the Lord's intention in regard to this sacrament. He considered that a general act of healing was more

likely to have been intended. This was one of the reasons which prompted the compilers of our liturgy to include the special Healing Service. This service incorporates some of the features of Penance—the laying -on of hands—and some of the features of Holy Unction—the anointing with oil—and care must be taken not to confuse the various rites.

HOLY UNCTION OR EXTREME UNCTION

Extreme Unction is the last of the sacraments which the church administers to her children. Coming after Penance it may be considered to be in the nature of a consummation. It is defined as the "anointing of the sick with holy oil, accompanied with prayer." In such of the churches as administer it, it is called Extreme Unction because it is the last unction a Christian receives at the close of life. In the Liberal Catholic Church it is called Holy Unction since it is felt that greater use should be made of the grace bestowed in the improvement of the condition of the sick, rather than that the sacrament should be administered only when life is receding.* The lay person receives three unctions, the first at Baptism, the second at Confirmation and the third at death. The Priest is further anointed at his ordination and the Bishop at his consecration.

The sensible sign is the unction. The power to confer grace is set out in the words of St. James: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up . . . ". The Divine institution took place when the Lord sent forth His disciples by twos, charging them "to cast out devils . . . and anoint with oil and absolve the sick."

Of the matter of the sacrament, the remote matter is the oil, blessed by the Bishop, and the proximate matter the anointing of the body in relation to the five senses. This anointing with oil admirably expresses the interior unction of the soul by the work of the Holy Spirit. The recipient is anointed on the closed eyes, the lower part of the ears, the nostrils, closed mouth, hands, feet and loins. In the case of lay persons the palms of the hands are anointed, but Priests and Bishops are anointed on the backs of the hands, to seal up again the channels opened at ordination. Again, the form consists of the words used to accompany the action. The words are: "By this holy anointing and of His most tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatsoever sins thou hast committed by sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch." In all other sacraments the form is expressed positively—"I baptize . . . "etc. In this sacrament it is modified or qualified by the word "may". The propriety of this difference will appear when it is remembered that the sacrament is

*In this view the Liberal Catholic Church has been followed by other western catholic churches. The correct use of Holy Unction has now been restored. e.g. by the Roman Church. ✠JAMES.

administered for the health of the body as well as of the soul, and it may not please God to restore physical health. The Minister is an elder of the church—that is, a Bishop or Priest.

As has already been mentioned, this sacrament in the Liberal Catholic Church is approached somewhat differently because it was considered capable of wider application, as is shown in the preamble to "Holy Unction and Communion of the Sick" in our liturgy. The formula is brought into line with the phraseology of other parts of our liturgy and, in addition to the organs of the senses, the "forces centres" in the body—at the top of the head, between the eyebrows, the front of the throat, the heart, navel, spleen and base of the spine—may also be anointed. This has the effect of quietening down the centres vivified during life, and of preparing the man for death. Having provided man with the means of living well during earthly life, the Church, at the close of that life, offers the sacrament of Holy Unction to give him grace to die well. The child is met with the initiatory rite of Baptism. The grace then given is confirmed so that the youth may become a full member of the Church and a Soldier of the Cross. His spirit is nourished with the Bread of Life, and finally the Church stands ready at the closing hour to help him peacefully to cast off the worn-out frame and pass quickly and easily onwards into the fuller life.*

HOLY ORDERS

Holy Orders is one of the sacraments ordained for the benefit and sanctification of society as well as for the grace it brings to individual souls. On Holy Orders all the other sacraments more or less depend. Some depend on Orders essentially, and others for their solemnity and ceremonies. Thus, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Penance and Unction are wholly dependent, while Baptism and Matrimony depend upon Holy Orders for the ceremonies and solemnities.

In all ages certain people have been set apart and charged with sacred functions, for example, Aaron and the sons of Levi. Christ called individuals to His band, trained them and constituted them "Priests of the new dispensation". When He said "Do this in remembrance of Me", He gave them power to consecrate the Blessed Sacrament; when He said "As the Father hath sent me so send I you" He gave them power to do all things as He Himself had done. The

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*It is not desirable to incorporate personal experiences in an article of this nature, but it may be of interest to mention some. I have noticed that when I have administered Extreme Unction to dying persons either in full form with oil, or in an emergency, mentally, their sufferings have usually been eased and their passing made peaceful, the lessening or cessation of the struggle coinciding with the closing of the centres of the body. Nurses with whom I have discussed this have confirmed that these phenomena have also come within their own experience. T.W.S.

Roman Catholic Church defines Holy Orders as "A sacrament by which Bishops, Priests and other Ministers are ordained and receive power and grace to perform their sacred functions".

The sensible sign is the imposition of hands and the giving of relevant instruments (chalice, crozier, Book of the Gospels, key etc.) and also the words used. The matter is also the imposition of the hands and the giving of the instruments, while the form consists of the words used and the imposition and bestowal. The Orders are seven in number, but certain intermediate grades also exist. There are two groups of Orders, major and minor, but the classification within the groups varies slightly in different branches of the church.

The minor orders consist of Doorkeeper, Reader, Exorcist and Acolyte (with Tonsure or Cleric as a preliminary grade which only admits to the ecclesiastical state.) That arrangement is generally accepted. The Roman Catholic Church held until recently the major orders of Sub-Deacon, Deacon and Priest, with the Bishop as a High-Priest. The office of Bishop is spoken of as "the plenitude of the priestly power."

The Liberal Catholic Church in common with the Eastern Churches holds the grade of Sub-deacon to be an intermediate one between major and minor orders, and that major orders consist of Deacon, Priest and Bishop. The Roman Catholic Church admits that in the beginning Sub-deacon was a minor order but by the time of Pope Innocent III it was a major order in the West. The Minister in all cases of orders must be a Bishop. Originally each order had special functions to perform, but, as is said in our liturgy, "Time has robbed them of their functions", and the minor orders are now used as periods of special training for the greater ones. As it may be helpful in understanding the whole system, certain details of each are given below.

Tonsure or Cleric

This is not really an order, but the cutting of the hair and the receipt of a surplice signifies one devoted to the service of Christ. Formerly it was not given separately, but as a preliminary part of minor orders. The shaving of the top of the head, ostensibly as a sign of humility and a rejection of personal pride, may have some reference to the preparation of the "force centre" at the crown of the head. In the Liberal Catholic Church this grade of cleric is concerned with physical control.

Ostiarius or Doorkeeper

The ordinand is at the beginning or entrance, his duty being to guard the church door. He is given a key and a bell, the former to keep out all that is unworthy or evil, and the latter to summon the faithful. It signified control of the emotions.

Lector or Reader

The ordinand is given a book, his duty being to read passages of the scriptures and the divine office. This grade signified control and purification of the mind.

Exorcist

In this grade the ordinand is given a sword and the book of exorcisms. The special function was to exorcise, to cast out evils. The lesson to be learned in this grade is development of the Will.

Acolyte

At the admission to this grade the ordinand is given a lighted candle and cruets; these instruments refer to the original duties of setting and serving the altar. The lesson to be learned is that of quickening the spiritual faculties.

Sub-Deacon

The sub-deacon receives an empty chalice, paten, cruets, lavabo bowl and towel, to signify his special service at the altar. The amice, formally bestowed, signifies control of speech. He is clothed in the tunicle as "the garment of gladness" and given the maniple. Finally he is handed the Book of Epistles and given authority to read them at Mass.

Up to this point the ordinands are "admitted in the Name of Christ."

Deacon

This is the first order in which the words of institution are "Receive the Holy Ghost". The Bishop uses only his right hand, keeping the crozier in his left. The new deacon is given the stole but wears it only over one shoulder to signify that the Yoke of the Lord as yet bears lightly upon him. Clothed in the dalmatic, he is handed the Book of the Gospels with authority to read them at Mass. He also has the privilege of administering the Eucharist.

Priest

In the ordination to the priesthood the ceremonies and solemnities are elaborate but the essential is that the bishop places both his hands, in silence, upon the ordinand's head. Subsequently the new priest hears the words "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God". The stole is now put over the other shoulder as well, and crossed over the breast to signify that the full Yoke is thereby laid upon him. The special eucharistic vestment is given and the hands anointed and bound together. Whilst the hands are still bound a full chalice and paten, with wafer, are placed between the fingers, and the ordinand is given authority to offer Mass. It is interesting to recall that Bishop Wedgwood was most insistant that hands should not be untied until a few minutes had elapsed, to give time for the ordinand to receive the full benefit and effectiveness of the anointing.

Bishop

The ceremonies connected with the consecration of a bishop are the most elaborate of all, but the majority of them are only additional solemnities, such as three consecrators, the oaths, enthronement, Te Deum, homage, etc. The essentials are the actual imposition of hands with the appropriate words "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a bishop in the church of God", the anointing of the head and hands and the bestowal of the staff, cross and ring, and Book of Gospels. At one time it was thought that the bestowal of these instruments, rather than the imposition of hands, was the essential part, but that view is no longer held. The mitre is not bestowed until after the Consecration Mass is finished, for although a sign of dignity, it is not exclusively episcopal. Abbots and other prelates also wear the mitre.

In all these orders the man is set apart for certain functions and blessed in the requisite way to enable him properly to perform those functions which are for the benefit and satisfaction of all men; but in their worthy performance grace comes indeed to the soul of the officiant.

MATRIMONY

Matrimony is one of the two sacraments deemed not to be necessary for any particular individual, but only for the community. (The other sacrament is Holy Orders). One may receive these sacraments or not, according to one's needs and qualifications, but they exist for the good of the whole.

Marriage customs have varied a great deal from age to age and from place to place. In primitive times men and women came together by instinct and could part at will. As evolution progressed certain mutual obligations came to be recognized and some form of legal covenant accepted. Marriage customs have always very closely reflected the attitude of the times towards women. In many of the quite high phases of civilization marriage never attained more than the status of a legal covenant, frequently with almost all the advantages exclusively in the man's favour. Of the ancient religions, Hinduism appears to be the only one where marriage was thought of as being a sacrament and having primarily a spiritual basis rather than a physical one. According to Mosaic law marriage was a legal covenant only.

The Christian Church teaches that matrimony was taken up from the purely legal status and instituted as a sacrament by Christ when His first miracle was performed at the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee. All sacraments must have been divinely instituted and His actual attendance at the marriage feast is held to have raised its status. It is possible that the changing of water into wine has some symbolic and mystical significance in this particular connection, but there are, of course, other interpretations of this miracle.

So much then, for the divine institution, and we now come to the matter, form and minister. The remote matter is the bodies of the contracting couple and the proximate matter the mutual delivery of their bodies or each other, or the words and signs expressing consent, inasmuch as power is thereby given to the contracting parties over each other's body. The form is the mutual acceptance of the bodies or the same words and signs inasmuch as by them is the power accepted. Thus the matter consists of the giving up of the contracting parties to each other; the form consisting of the words and outward signs by which the man and the woman accept each other as man and wife. All this may have something of a carnal flavour, but a moment's reflection shows that it fits logically into the system. We must then consider the minister, and he is not, as is commonly supposed, the officiating priest, for he only confirms and blesses the marriage. The actual contracting parties are themselves the Minister, for the reason that their mutual contract is itself the sacrament. They come together spiritually by mutual consent and acceptance, and that union is blessed by the priest.

The church has always taught that marriage on earth symbolizes the mystical marriage of Christ with His church, this being the main ground for its general opposition to divorce and remarriage. As, however, in this imperfect world, accommodation needs to be made for the frailty of human nature, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches meet the difficulty by saying that in specific cases the marriage never really took place—the sacramental aspect being incomplete or lacking in some respect, such as the absence of willingness of one of the parties.

Sacraments that confer a character upon the soul cannot be repeated except on grounds of previous invalidity. The older churches do not claim that marriage is one of these, although the inner vision suggests that it may be such, or at any rate may border upon such. The permanence of marriage is always stressed because it reflects the indissoluble union betwixt Christ and His Church.

To conclude: it can be said that the grace of our Lord which comes to us through the Sacraments remedies our weakness by the communication of His Strength and Blessing.

Without encroaching upon the power that is given us to act in free will as we please, it enables us to do what we could not otherwise effect in our own inner development and in the service of our brethren. The supernatural aid imparted in sacramental grace inspires us to act virtuously and in due season brings forth the Fruits of the Spirit.